

**Testimony by Kirsten Bechtel MD In Support of
Proposed Bill 502: AN ACT CONCERNING BICYCLE SAFETY AND
TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS; Proposed Bill 6368: AN ACT ALLOWING TOWNS
TO ESTABLISH TWO-WAY PROTECTED BICYCLE LANES**

Committee on Transportation
February 11, 2015
Submitted by Kirsten Bechtel MD

Distinguished Members of the Committee on Transportation:

I am an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Yale School of Medicine and Chair of the Yale University Traffic Safety Committee. I am writing to express my support of Proposed Bills 502 and 6368. I think I speak for many cyclists in saying that we all want to share the streets equitably and safely with other road users. Both Proposed Bills 502 and 6368, and the amendments proposed by BikeWalkCT will provide a safe, legal and consistent rationale for cyclists to share the roads with motor vehicles.

Bills 502 and 6368 will also give municipalities the flexibility to design roads in a way that would encourage cycling, reduce pollution, and improving commerce by enabling people to cycle to destinations that they would not otherwise. The ability to allow urban municipalities to install two-way cycle tracks would reduce potential dangerous cycling against traffic or wrong-way riding due to out of direction travel, where there is a high concentration of destinations on one side of the street. Separated cycle tracks were found to increase safety by 90% over similar roadways with no similar bicycle accommodations. It has also been found that installation of separated bicycle accommodations encourage cycling, which would in turn reduce the need for costly parking accommodations for motor vehicles, reduce pollution and encourage economic activity in urban municipalities.

It is not surprising, therefore, that cities worldwide are recognizing the importance of making their streets safe for cycling. In New Haven, where I practice medicine, Mayor Harp has emphasized that transportation is a civil right that includes being able to safely cycle on city streets and share the streets equitably with motor vehicles. New Haven has the highest proportion of residents who do not use a motor vehicle to commute to work. This bill will make it safer for those who currently cycle and encourage many people to start cycling in New Haven and other similar urban municipalities. For these reasons, I support Proposed Bills 502 and 6368.

Respectfully submitted,
Kirsten Bechtel MD

References

http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/planning/facilities_bike_cycletracks.cfm
<http://www.hshassoc.com/blog/protected-bicycle-lanes-safer-attract-new-riders/>